

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 31/047/2004

23 February 2004

UA 77/04 Fear for safety/ possible "disappearance"

NEPAL **Chandra Prasad Nepal (m), aged 47, teacher**  
**Sabitri Nepal (m), aged 40, his wife, AI Nepal member**

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Chandra Prasad Nepal and his wife Sabitri Nepal were reportedly arrested on 17 February by security forces personnel in plain clothes. Their whereabouts are unknown and Amnesty International is concerned that they have "disappeared".

A group of about 20 men arrived at the family home of Chandra Prasad and Sabitri Nepal in ward no.1, Belsi, in Ratnanagar municipality, Chitwan district, at 1pm. They said they were soldiers of the Royal Nepal army. They arrested the couple and took them away on foot. When they reached the highway the soldiers hailed a public transport minibus, and the couple were driven away. It is believed that they were driven to Bhandara camp, the security post of the Unified Command (army and armed police force) for Chitwan district. However, staff at the camp reportedly now say that the couple have been moved on from there, and they do not know where to.

The reasons for the arrests are not known, but it is believed that the security forces may have suspected Chandra Prasad and Sabitri Nepal of involvement with the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) (Maoist). Efforts to locate them, including visiting army camps and informing the local press, have so far failed.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has been concerned about a deterioration in the human rights situation in Nepal since the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) (Maoist) launched a "people's war" in February 1996. Reports of human rights abuses by both the security forces and the CPN (Maoist) escalated after the army was mobilized and a state of emergency imposed between November 2001 and August 2002. Many people were arrested under the 2002 Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Control and Punishment) Act (TADA), which gave the security forces the power to arrest without warrant and detain suspects in police custody for up to 90 days. Scores of people are reported to have been held for weeks or even months in illegal army custody without access to their families, lawyers or medical treatment. In 2002, Nepal recorded the highest number of "disappearances" of any country in the world. The CPN (Maoist) are also reported to have abducted scores of people.

On 29 January 2003, both sides agreed to a ceasefire. Three rounds of peace talks were held - in April, May and August - between the government and representatives of the CPN (Maoist). The CPN (Maoist) announced they were withdrawing from the ceasefire agreement as of 27 August 2003. Since then, fighting has resumed throughout the country, and Amnesty International has received reports of both sides committing human rights abuses. In particular there has been a rise in the number of "disappearances" at the hands of the security forces and abductions by the CPN (Maoist).

## RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Chandra Prasad Nepal and Sabitri Nepal, who were reportedly arrested on 17 February;
- urging that they be treated humanely while in custody and not tortured or ill-treated;

- calling on the authorities to make public their whereabouts and to grant them immediate access to their relatives, lawyers and any medical attention they may require;
- calling for them to be released immediately and unconditionally, unless they are to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

**APPEALS TO:**

**(Faxes may be switched off outside office hours, 5 ½ hours ahead of GMT)**

General Pyar Jung Thapa  
Chief of Army Staff (COAS)  
Army Headquarters  
Kathmandu, Nepal

**Telegram:** Commander-in-Chief, Army Headquarters, Kathmandu, Nepal

**Fax:** + 977 1 4 242 168

**Salutation:** Dear Commander-in-Chief

Colonel Nilendra Prasad Aryal  
Head of Army Human Rights Cell  
Army Headquarters  
Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal

**Telegram:** Colonel NP Aryal, Army Headquarters, Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal

**Fax:** + 977 1 4 226 292/ 229 451 (If someone answers the telephone please ask them in English to switch on the fax machine, and resend the fax).

**Salutation:** Dear Colonel

**COPIES TO:**

Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa  
Prime Minister's Office  
Singha Durbar  
Kathmandu, Nepal

**Fax:** + 977 1 4 227 286

**Salutation:** Dear Prime Minister

and to diplomatic representatives of Nepal accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 5 April 2004.